



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE CATEGORY "HUMAN PROCESS"— A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

ALBION W. SMALL
University of Chicago

ABSTRACT

For technical convenience it may be advisable to emphasize the distinction between the operative aspect of experience and the content aspect, by confining the phrase *the social process* to the former and *the human process* to the latter. The sociologists could not, if they would, absolve themselves from their share of the function of interpreting the *human process*. This note proposes a formula of the human process developed out of generalization of attitudes toward wants and of resulting adjustments of values. An excursus on Darwinism illustrates by analogy the relation of the formula to the present state of sociological science. The generalization *conservation of compatibles* invites reconsideration of the entire record of the *human process* on the fact side, and further use of the hypothesis for criticism of conduct values.

We have had much to say about the category "process"—first in its generic content, second as a term corresponding with phenomena of persons and groups of persons, i.e., "the social process," or social processes.

It is now in order to distinguish between two aspects of the same reality which neither sociologists, nor psychologists, nor general philosophers, nor all combined have sufficiently advertised.

Two sequences of operations, each dependent upon the other, each however separable in thought from the other, are observable in human experience. Let us designate these distinguishable series provisionally by the phrases "the social process" and "the human process."

It would evidently be a convenience if we could adopt two terms which would carry on their face greater difference of meaning than is suggested by those just proposed. Our business now is not with words but with operations, and we may proceed to point out the content for which we adopt the two labels experimentally as symbols.

Probably most of the sociologists, if they use both phrases, unconsciously employ them interchangeably—as complete syno-

¹ A section from a graduate course on general sociology.

nyms. The present suggestion is an effort to start a usage of emphasizing an important difference which they may be employed to indicate; viz., the difference between the *operative* aspect of human experience, for which the present proposal would reserve the category "the *social* process," and the *content* aspect of experience, to which we would give the name "the human process."¹

To illustrate by a far-fetched comparison. When a railroad man speaks of "railroading" he has in mind primarily some or all of the *technical processes* involved in the building and management of railroads. He is thinking of the financing processes, the construction processes, the maintenance processes, the equipping processes, the train-operating processes, the auditing processes, etc. All this is the machinery side of railroading—its technique, the details of its methods. These would be in principle precisely the same if a given road were devoted entirely to the service of war as they are when the road is carrying on operations of peace.

As contrasted with the professional railroad man, the professional economist, that is, the general economist who is not specializing on the economics of railroading, lumps all these details in a scheme of incidentals to the functions which railroading as a whole serves within the entire life of society. He brings into his foreground not the details which constitute the mechanism of railroading, but the services which the organization of these details perform—primarily *transportation* and *communication*.

As the terms are to be used in this section, the category "human process" is to the category "social process" as the categories "transportation" and "communication" are to the category "railroading" in the sense above indicated. Further analysis will serve to emphasize the distinction.

From the earliest philosophizings of which we have any record, wide-looking people have tried to bring the human lot under some general conception which would embrace its absolute and ultimate meaning. Apparently the desire for such a conclusive interpretation is as strong today as ever. Perhaps it is shared by larger proportions of people than in any previous age. We presume that

¹ The need of this distinction did not impress me until a year or two ago, and I have never before tried to be consistent in using the terms.

popular education has increased average powers of reflection and generalization. If we are right, it is not an unnatural inference that the philosophical yearning makes itself felt in larger ratios of outreachings for comprehensive surveys of life. However this may be, from Plato down to Nietzsche there have been innumerable attempts to state just what human life is, in its essence and in its totality. These attempts have taken shape in theological, philosophical, historico-philosophical, poetical and pseudo-scientific hypotheses as to the total meaning of life. It may as well be confessed in all frankness that an important stimulus of the sociological movement all over the world, and particularly in America, has from the beginning been desire to find the master key to the total meaning of life for which so many predecessors had searched.

The notable difference between the sociologists and most of the previous searchers has been that, before the sociological period, virtually all the inquirers into the final philosophy of life had consciously or unconsciously set as their goal discovery of the meaning of human life *as it appears to omniscient mind*. Most of the sociologists have gradually schooled themselves into the humility of trying to sum up merely the most comprehensive meaning that observation of human life discloses to finite mind. We are trying to bring all the processes of human life into a focus that will exhibit their coherence, and to that extent their value. We have learned that we have no competence beyond that range.

Accordingly the present section is not an attempt to tell what human life ought to be. It does not exploit a theory—either of the writer or of someone else—about life. At first, and until notice is given of departure from actual findings by observation to inferences from the findings, the section simply sets in order facts of human experience in their cumulative force as automatic revealers of the substance or content of life as we know it—the human process as an economy of realizing values resident in people.

To begin with, then, human beings are *want-generators*. This form of expression implies no snap judgments about antecedent psychological problems. The term want, as used in this discussion, stands for all forth-puttings of personal power toward objects. We thereby no more commit ourselves, and it is no more due from

us to commit ourselves to any previous conception of the essence of wants than it is necessary for an engineer in dealing with a dynamo as a power-mediator to solve the mystery of the essence of electricity.

Human beings are want-generators. This is not a theory. It is a concrete fact. It is no statement of anyone's fancy. It is simply verbal formulation of that which everyone finds in detail whenever one turns sufficiently penetrating analysis upon a human being.

To bring this fact out as dramatically as possible, let us use a little Jules Verne or H. G. Wells imagination. Let us suppose the whole surface of our globe, both land and water, is peeled off, as they skin a steer at the stockyards, and that this surface—say to the deepest level at which mines or fisheries are worked—is spread out flat like a map. Suppose we are up in an airplane with some sort of optical instruments that bring this whole surface into a true perspective. Suppose, by means of some sort of super-Roentgen-ray attachments, we were able to penetrate far enough into the motivation of the human activities which would be within our field of vision to answer the question whether any common method of actuation is in evidence. Should we discover any identical factor in the behavior of all men, women, and children on the earth?

We have already answered the question. Whether these people are aware of it or not, all of them are alike in this radical fact that each and every one is spending his life trying to satisfy wants.

More than this: Let us suppose we have another attachment to our optical instruments, which carries our observation back along the historic and prehistoric ages. From the first man that has left any intelligible traces of his activities, says the Neanderthal man, down to the latest recipient of the Nobel prize, or the latest member-elect of the French Academy, each animal specimen that has left enough evidence about itself to warrant its classification as a human being has thereby, directly or inferentially, betrayed likeness to every other human being ever observed *in this one thing*—whether in any other or not is a question by itself—each and every man, woman, and child is like every other *in this one thing*, that from life's end to life's end each is trying to satisfy wants.¹

¹ The question whether, or to what extent, this fact extends into subhuman species has no bearing upon anything vital in our later argument.

Perhaps the foregoing sentences have not said anything. Perhaps they are merely sterile words—Pickwickian parodies of real knowledge. On the other hand, it is not inconceivable that in fastening upon this commonplace observation as a clue we may have seized the master key to all that science in the strict sense will ever discover about the content aspect of human life. Let us follow this conceivability into certain details.

If we kept on watching, by the aid of these super-machineries which we have imagined—and this conceit is merely a figure for all the apparatus of observation of human beings which the different kinds of research have invented—if we pursued our observation of human beings as want-generators, we should soon find that the wants which urge people vary indescribably in detail in different times and places. We should find that some people—even in the same time and place—do not show a following through toward all the kinds of wants that we discover other people trying to satisfy.

If we consider these facts long enough we discover that all the different kinds of wants which human beings have been known to manifest may be assembled under certain characterizing labels.

Up to this point sociologists are unanimous. They find that people are always and everywhere prompted to action by wants.¹ They find that these wants are innumerable in detail, but much fewer in fundamental kind. They find that some people appear to be moved by some variation of each of these generically similar kinds of wants, other people by only a part of them.

On the other hand, all social scientists differ among themselves as to *how many* kinds of wants human beings have manifested. This is a question of detail which should not arrest us in the least in following out the present clue. Whether the generic human wants number x or y or z should not distract our attention from the more important matter. The question of numbers is relatively trivial. It does not change the essential fact that human life, from a very rudimentary stage, is invariably a want-generating process,

¹ If they prefer some other word—*wish*, *valuation*, *interest*, etc.—they are really going back to, and not necessarily farther than our initial observation *want*. As I use the term "interest" in a special sociological sense (see Small, *General Sociology*, pp. 433 *et passim*) it stands for a hypothetical something back of wishes or wants or valuations, but that hypothesis need not be brought into the present argument.

and furthermore a process of attempting to satisfy the wants generated. The question of the number of kinds of wants thus far generated is merely one of the phases of difficulty which our minds meet in trying to grasp the facts. The differences of opinion about numbers which are rooted in differences of opinion about principles of classification are simply differences about the most adequate ways of setting the facts in order in our thinking.

Mr. Edwin Markham, the poet, reduces human wants to three—Bread, Beauty, Brotherhood. The alliteration is appealing, and Mr. Markham shows better reasons than that in support of the classification. It would not be a profitable use of time in the present connection to discuss long with anyone who found the classification adequate.

Others have found it most convenient to gather all discovered human wants into six groups. Still others prefer a different number of subcategories, resulting from different principles of classification. It is not necessary for the present purpose to decide whether the most objective arrangement of human wants is into three groups, or six or sixty-six or six hundred and sixty-six. The important thing here and now is to recognize the parts which non-identical and somewhat divergent wants play in the entire drama of human life.

Provisionally then we will arrange our further illustrations of certain primary phenomena of wants around a sixfold classification which has been found somewhat useful for more than thirty years.¹ The main thing now to be urged holds good of human wants, however they are grouped, provided the classification does not arbitrarily exclude any actually observed human want.

Our general observation then is that typical people, the world over and the ages through, in the degree in which they have arrived at rudimentary expression of all departments of their human nature, have betrayed similarity in following after some variation and combination of or samples from these six different kinds of wants. They want: (1) To Be; (2) To Have; (3) To Rank; (4) To Know;

¹ The accusation was once made that it had been stolen from Plato. While we should plead "not guilty" technically, it is not so clear that Plato's analysis did not amount to this sixfold scheme.

(5) To Feel; (6) To Fit. Expressed in substantives, they want: (1) Health; (2) Wealth; (3) Prestige, (Sociability); (4) Knowledge; (5) Beauty; (6) Rightness.¹

It would be easy to expand these categories into a bulky treatise on *the typical human wants under the aspect of social forces*. For the present purpose we shall confine ourselves to brief expansion of the titles.

1. In the first place, people want to *be*, i.e., to live in the sheer animal sense. This means that they not only want to stay alive, to continue breathing, but they want to grow and use their bodily powers. They want to be physically strong, and to use their lusty strength for all it is worth. They want to luxuriate in physical existence. To symbolize all this we use the alternate label, *Health*.

2. People want to *have*; to gather things into their exclusive possession or control; first, because things have immediate uses, then because remoter uses of things make possessions desirable. Our blanket term for all the objects aimed at by this type of want is *Wealth*.

3. People want to *rank*; to have a rating in their group or groups; if possible to rank above somebody; at least to be counted equal to somebody, preferably to many somebodies; in the last resort to escape ranking below their neighbors. For all the objects thus wanted there is no thoroughly satisfactory label, but for several years the term *Prestige* has been serving some of the users of this classification as an improvement upon the earlier name *Sociability*.

4. People want to *know*; to reflect in their own minds what is, and what occurs outside of their own minds, together with the reasons for this being and occurring. The appropriate substantive for this whole range of objects wanted is *Knowledge*.

5. People want to *feel*, in the sense of enjoyment for enjoyment's sake. They want to experience every sort of pleasure-giving emotion, in distinction, for our purposes, from pleasurable physical sensations. They want stimuli of their different capacities for satisfaction of other than bodily tastes, regardless of any and all

¹ My colleague, Professor Faris, is using a quite different classification of "wishes." The essential matter in the present argument would not be affected in the least if his analysis should completely displace the one here used.

ulterior values of the tastes or emotions. For the entire range of objects appealing to the wants which we sometimes designate as aesthetic we employ the term *Beauty*.

6. People want to *fit* into the scheme of things which is oppressively stronger and bigger than themselves, to which, from the earliest beginnings, they have various kinds of nondescript sense of responsibility. No so-called "nature-people" has been discovered which did not display some sort of furtive notion of being at the mercy of some kind of powers pervading surrounding space; and no peoples have been found utterly wanting in yearnings to adjust these liabilities so that they may fit into their lot in life, i.e., so that they may be "right" with their surroundings. We use the term *Rightness* rather than *Righteousness* to designate these wants for this reason: "Righteousness" is a conception which belongs in a relatively late stage of mental and moral consciousness. It does not belong with the more rudimentary types of desire for adjustment. Dr. Charles R. Henderson used this sixfold classification of wants, but with the reservation that *Religion* should be the sixth category, or otherwise it should be recognized as a *seventh* primary want. The problem of the relation of religion to elementary human wants lies outside the scope of the present analysis. The hypothesis which would be used if the problem were to be discussed here would be that religion is a response to the *totality* of the elemental wants, and cannot be accounted for as though it were co-ordinate with these factors.

Let us be reminded that we are not now dealing with theory in the speculative sense. We are literally reviewing facts of observation. We are reciting not what we wish human life had been, not what we think human life ought to be. We are pointing out certain elements of what human life actually has been, and we are saying that these elements may turn out to be more significant than has been supposed.

Let us take a next step: Men have (first) been want-generators. In the second place, men have *graduated* their wants.

We are now merely recapitulating facts, not theorizing about them. We do not even go so far as to comment on the methods by which these things have come to pass. Still less do we venture

remarks about the reasons for these occurrences. Otherwise we should have ventured into the realm of interpretation, of speculation. Our effort is now rather to put indubitable facts together in such a way that they will present more meaning than has hitherto appeared. We are not even trying now to classify the ways in which men have graduated their wants. We are simply advertising the fact of graduation.

First, then, as between species and varieties and units of the same want: most obviously under (1) *health*, the gradations of the food want. When bare existence was at stake in the ordinary conditions of life, men could not be squeamish if they would about their food. They ate what they could get, and when they could get it. From this extreme there are countless removes out to the most whimsical food demands of the epicure, or the most scientific standards of the dietitian. The like gradation has been exhibited in successive variations of other types of wants within the "health" category; for example, all those wants which reach out for bodily power, efficiency, endurance. We have no authoritative terms for the extremes of this scale, and we have no precise scheme for the intervening gamut. No one doubts, however, that there are many steps in the gradation between human beings at their physical minimum and human beings at the height of what is known by physical trainers as "condition." We have no doubt, either, that men have tended to the adoption, from time to time, of tacit standards of "condition," which standards express more or less permanent fixation of health wants at points above others less exacting. Without venturing now even a guess in explanation, there seems to have operated among people some sort of recognition of *utility*, which in the long run has resulted in choices of types of satisfaction increasingly responding to the want behind the demand.

To illustrate further within (2) the "wealth" category: Men of primitive types have coveted as possessions many things which, from the civilized man's point of view were very slightly worth having—things which had different sorts of ceremonial, sentimental, or superstitious values. The psychoses of primitive people in this connection seem to be like those of the children who reject an expensive toy, a toy perhaps which might do much to rouse their

ingenuity, or which might afford varieties of amusement, and choose in its place a rag doll or a scrap of rubbish. Then men have coveted possessions—like the wampum of American Indians—which, though intrinsically worthless, had a precarious value, conferred by custom for display and for some of the uses of money. On the more sophisticated planes men have desired possessions, simply as wealth, on a scale determined first by the direct utility of the goods for purposes cherished in the given group, and second by the readiness of convertibility of the goods into other goods or into services for which the current standards of life created demands. Thus the wealth desired by typical persons has ranged from the flocks that Abel wanted to raise to the pieces of paper stored in modern safety vaults and exchangeable for every sort of goods in the market.

No more than in the previous case have we the means of arranging an absolute scale of objects sought by the wealth desire. They range from baubles that tickle the vanity of savage chiefs to the pearl necklaces and diamond tiaras of European courts; or from the flocks and herds of migratory tribes to the gold reserves of modern banks. The point at present is that people have always tended, consciously or unconsciously, to establish some sort of a scale of desirability among ways of satisfying their wealth desire. They have tended to establish orders of precedence between these different types of satisfaction. Notoriously in England, for example, from time immemorial landed wealth has ranked above money wealth.

So of the other wants. The desire to *rank* has ranged from ambition to be chief of the clan, or the most skilful hunter, or the most valiant fighter of the tribe, to desire for leadership in any of the modern senses—to be pope, or war lord, or head of New York or Paris or London “society.” Throughout recorded history political rulers have made much of playing upon this factor of human nature. As means of control, signs of social distinction, badges of separation between those of greater and less prestige have always been potent. The ranks *principes*, *duces*, *missi dominici*, etc., of Carolingian times were partly functional, partly honorific; but they were the former in part because they were also the latter. After Bourbon aristocracy had been destroyed as an institution the

Napoleonic upstartocracy maintained its brief lease of power in part by establishing a substitute hierarchy of ostensibly republican distinctions. English society is a pyramid of social strata, each of which, except the king at the top and the wife of the navy at the bottom, is settled between a recognized stratum of its betters above and its inferiors below.

The desire (4) to *know* has ranged from the childish curiosities that stored up nature lore and constructed mythologies to the most searching work of modern observatories, and laboratories, and clinics, and field explorations, and statistical bureaus and libraries.

The desire (5) to *feel* has ranged from the expressions in totem poles and tattooing and tomtoms to Angelo's sculpture, and Raphael's painting and Bach's music.

The desire (6) to *fit* has run the gamut from fear of local spirits to aspiration for establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. In its more refined forms it has stimulated such contrasted expressions as, for example, St. Augustine's exclamation: "For thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart cannot be quiet until it resteth in thee."¹

A variation of the same want asserts itself in that modern version of classic humanism—"The most eloquent and authoritative expression of this view is Renan's famous prayer on the Acropolis, in his *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse*. Standing on that citadel of the old Athenian faith, with the marvelous ruins of the Parthenon before his eyes, he uttered his adoration of the goddess Athena:

O nobility! O simple and true beauty! Deity whose cult signifies reason and wisdom, thou whose temple is an eternal lesson in conscience and sincerity, I come late to the threshold of thy mysteries. To find thee, there were needed for me endless studies. The invitation which thou gavest to the Athenian at his birth with a smile, I have conquered only by reflection and at the price of long labor. . . .

Dost thou remember that day, under the archonship of Dionysodorus, when a little ugly Jew, speaking the Greek of Syria, came hither, passed over thy sacred place, read thy inscriptions without understanding, and found in thy enclosure an altar, as he thought, dedicated to the *unknown God*? Ah well, this little Jew has won the day; for a thousand years the world was a desert where no flower grew. . . . Goddess of order, image of the stead-

¹ *Quia fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*, as rendered by Paul Elmer More, *Shelburne Essays*, 9th Series, p. 85.

fastness of heaven, to love thee was accounted a sin, and today, now that by painful toil we have come nearer to thee, we are accused of committing a crime against the spirit of man. . . . The world shall not be saved except it return to thee and repudiate its barbarous bonds.¹

Simpler and profounder than either is the ascription of the prophet Isaiah:

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city, salvation will he appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."²

All such variations of wants, we repeat, illustrate the human tendency to widen the range of gradation between the crude and the refined in human valuations.

In the third place, and so evident that we have not altogether succeeded in reserving reference to this aspect of the facts, the human process has encountered *congruities* and *incongruities* between wants. Some of these diversities are to all practical intents absolute; others of them are relative.

For example, satisfaction of the health want at its minimum, viz., maintenance of mere animal existence, is necessary to the satisfaction first of more complex health wants and then of any of the other five wants. One must be, in order that one may have, rank, know, feel, or fit. Almost as nearly absolute is the principle that a modicum of the wealth want must be satisfied as a condition of minimum satisfaction of the other five wants. Existence depends upon subsistence, and the other four satisfactions depend upon both.

If each person lived in a social vacuum, if each had only his direct intercourse with nature, there would be a third almost-absolute, viz., satisfaction of any want depends upon exertion by the bearer of the want. In actual society, with its multifold artificial arrangements, this law is often evaded; yet its operation is nevertheless the rule rather than the exception.

Descending from these large generalizations to concrete particulars, we observe baffling varieties and degrees of congruity between wants. Confining ourselves for the present to individual aspects of wants, we might illustrate without limit the common-

¹ More, *loc. cit.*, p. 96.

² Isa. 26:1-3.

place that human life is an economy of conduct in the presence of wants some of which are mutually affirmative, others of which are reciprocally negative. This too in unmeasured degrees. In general and in the long run we cannot have health if we prefer unsanitary modes of life. We cannot have physical strength if we prefer alcohol, narcotics, sensuality. We cannot have wealth if we prefer idleness and amusements. We cannot have prestige if we prefer to defy the mores of our group. We cannot have knowledge if we choose to leave our minds fallow. We cannot have beauty if we confine our attention to ugliness. We cannot have rightness if we ignore the problem phases of life, and yield ourselves indiscriminately to emotion.

These truisms are not too obvious for rehearsal in the service of the wider social generalizations which we are approaching.

In view of these familiar facts, a fourth commonplace is that life becomes a continuous process of choice between alternative wants, or proportions of wants, none of which can be satisfied absolutely. It is unnecessary to illustrate at length. The most elementary details will serve to suggest appropriate instances all along the line. Satisfaction of the health want, for instance, at any given grade or stage of its development, involves inhibition of that same health want in some other phase of its importunity. Many inhibitions of incongruous health wants must be self-enforced, in order to convert a maximum of the resources that can be controlled into that type of satisfaction of the health want which consists in physical prowess—competence for the chase, for war, for mountaineering, for bullfighting, for competitive athletics, for dependable nervous control. In the degree in which one wants endurance, one will be obliged to forego sensual indulgence. In the degree in which one wants sheer muscular power, one must abandon indolence and devote one's self to physical development.

If we glance at the wealth wants, in their different manifestations, we are reminded of the same commonplace. Our effort now is to bring the commonplace out into a prominence that will enforce a new meaning. Involuntary automatic gradations of wealth wants, in rough ways, result in dilemmas of choice between the involved types of satisfaction. Since possession of one kind of wealth for

whatever reason, in our judgment, outranks in desirability possession of another kind, if both kinds of wealth are impossible at the same time choice of one implies renunciation of the other. In this case the most hackneyed illustration is the best, viz., the elementary economic distinction between goods for hoarding, or for consumption, and goods for production. If we want wealth in coins, we must by so much forego possession of wealth in working capital. If we want wealth in cloth, we must give up so much wealth in the fibers that must be woven into the cloth. If we want wealth in houses, we must give up so much wealth in lumber. If we want wealth in crops, we must invest corresponding wealth in cultivation.

It is unnecessary to assemble illustrations from the other four types of wants. Our casual observation has stored up an exhaustless supply of particulars that carry the principle.

Nor is it necessary to marshal commonplaces that illustrate a logically still more advanced stage of this inevitable process of selection and rejection among wants that urge for satisfaction. We know that ordinary, everyday life is a continuous experience of saying, "thus far and no farther" to one type of want, in order that another type of want, preferred for better or worse reasons, may have a chance. We know that we may give the health wants such license that they reduce, if they do not nullify, possibility of each of the other types of satisfaction. In different ways the same is true of each of the six types of wants in their turns. There come times when each of them must be relatively restrained and repressed, or exaggeration of them will by so much restrict and repress normal ratios of the other satisfactions. Perhaps the extreme instance is *monasticism* as one of the mistakes of every religion which has adopted it. Referring to medieval Catholicism in particular, and taking into account now none of its social phases, but merely its consequences for the monks as persons, we may characterize monasticism in its ideals as a supreme effort after holiness. As it turned out, in its effects upon the monks in general, with conspicuous exceptions, monasticism resulted in distortion, nullification, demoralization, of normal personality.

So far as individual aspects of the human process are concerned, we may rest our case with the foregoing particulars. According to promise we have confined ourselves to rehearsal of facts of common

knowledge. We have assembled samples of facts recognizable by everyone in such sequence that they impress us as having some cumulative and constructive relation. We have thus far refrained from asking the question as to what relation of that sort may be carried in the facts. If scientific curiosity is allowed free course, however, it will sooner or later draw inferences from such indications, which have a legitimate place as hypotheses in explanation of the facts. We shall pass to such hypotheses presently. For simplicity of exposition we have up to this point chosen our illustrations from the individualistic side of the human reality. Every sociologist knows, however, that the most rudimentary expression of individual want is at the same time a function of group process. The group relationships which are now to be emphasized have much higher visibility in such uncritically presented want phenomena as we have used than in the complexity which closer analysis discovers. On the other hand, such uniformities of relationship as we have cited from individualistic aspects of experience characterize the whole scale of social reactions, from the molecular two-person type to contacts of nations and civilizations.

We pass then from facts of common knowledge to large generalizations. These generalizations are theses to be supported. They cannot be demonstrated out of hand. In the space now at our disposal they cannot even be fairly illustrated. They can merely be formulated as theorems which the present state of the evidence warrants as such, although they constitute merely beginnings of a theory to be tested, proposition after proposition, by further collection and criticism of evidence.

Most comprehensively then, we observe that human beings in their group relationships exhibit, with differences of detail, every one of the peculiarities which we have noticed in some of their individual aspects. Groups secrete wants. They grade wants, both of species within the same genus, and of wants unlike in principle. They standardize their wants. They establish hierarchies of wants. They encounter affinities and repulsions of wants, tendencies of wants to promote or inhibit one another. They encounter dilemmas of choice between wants to be encouraged and wants to be restrained. These things are true in countless varieties of ways, from the simplest family group up to the state or the entire complex

of reciprocally conscious states. Approximate satisfaction of the system of wants implicitly cherished at a given time constitutes the group mores, the group achievement, the group civilization of the period. We have aboriginal rivalry between clans or tribes for literal "place in the sun." If the one clan is able to monopolize a given area as source of food supply, another clan has only the alternatives of extinction on the spot or migration with danger of starvation before it can take possession of another sufficiently productive spot. Adequate biographies of human groups, especially of nationalities and states, would have to tell their story in part at least in terms of incessant readjustment to the impulsions of concentric and eccentric wants.

One of the most rudimentary formulas possible for the group aspect of the human process is that it is always accelerated by people's getting along with one another in their different groups in ways which help one another to satisfy their wants. In other words, the human process has been promoted by reducing the amount of hindrance to be overcome by the kinds of people who are trying to work at the same time for their own and one another's interests, and in maintaining as effective discouragements as possible of the kinds of people who interfere with one another's interests.

The unconscious or semi-conscious experimentations with the human conditions in which this economy is immanent have exhibited social powers of the relations which we have illustrated in the economy of individuals. Groups have reached countless types of temporary equilibrium between their wants. This fact has led philosophers from the earliest times of which records remain to entertain the idea of stages in human progress. To what extent the conception of continuity between the stages was taken into the account, or to what extent the presumption of discontinuity was involved, is a question which need not detain us here. The fact that social philosophers have tried to interpret the human career in terms of stages is of interest to us at this point simply as evidence of approximation to the conception for which we are trying to find complete expression in terms of the *human process*.¹

¹ One of the latest attempts to express the whole of human experience in terms of "stages" is that of Professor Simon N. Patton, *The Reconstruction of Social Theory*, Supplement to Annals of the American Academy, November, 1912.

Resuming now more direct treatment of the conception *the human process*, as a continuous, cumulative, constructive experience, in advance upon the more or less discontinuous disjunctive conceptions of the totality of human experience (as typified by some, at least, of the interpretations in terms of "stages") we may repeat (in substance) that there has been a parallelism between group phenomena, from least to greatest, and the individualistic aspects of crises and behavior toward wants. Groups have encountered wants which were mutually exclusive, either totally or partially. Groups have spontaneously or deliberately arranged gradations of wants with reference to group toleration or approval of the wants. Groups have both consciously and unconsciously adopted accommodations, adjustments, team work of assimilable wants; and taboos, exclusions, suppressions of non-assimilable wants, or persons urging the wants. From time immemorial, this has been the content of human experience considered in its process aspects and expressed in the most formal way.

To specify in a few conspicuous particulars: Throughout the known history of the world, men have been divided into the rare few who desired to drive or lead, and the many who were again divided between the larger mass willing to be driven or led, and the smaller mass composed of units doggedly refusing to acknowledge any authority but their own wills. Not yet has a consensus arrived between these types. Each type continues in every nation to perpetuate a problem of adjustment with the others or exclusion of the others.

It has taken all but the latest few minutes of expired historic time for men to perceive that political tyranny and political liberty cannot permanently exist together. The problem remains the order of the day in countless variations: What is the way of reconciliation? Which must go and which must stay, and by what means?

Men still living remember how the United States of America began tardily to accept the primary lesson that a nation cannot exist half-slave and half-free. We are still baffled by some of the conflicting interests left over from the futile attempt to prove the contrary.

Not until the beginning of the nineteenth century did men open their eyes to the fact that there must be an end to the impossible partnership between accelerated increase of population and stationary production of food. But relative overpopulation, and the interest of certain economic factors in the continuance of overpopulation, are among the most difficult terms in the world's present problems.

Men have always temporized with compromises which have been merely postponements of recognition that freedom of thought cannot coexist with either economic, political, academic, or ecclesiastical censorship. Yet no nation in the world is free from authoritarians and absolutists of various sorts who are trying to dominate.

The world has at last consciously confronted the stark dilemma that either free science or free war is destined to destroy the other; yet the world is still irresolute between the alternatives.

Outstanding facts of this order are but the commonplaces of our mortal career writ large. The entire history of every human group important enough to have a history is made up of minor facts incidental to such major facts as we have cited. The writers of history will never make human experience as instructive as it may be until they bring to light all that is knowable about men's blind gropings after stable adjustments between wants which proved to be reciprocally repellant in all the degrees between the difficult and the insurmountable.

In view of the foregoing, we submit another hypothetical proposition. Referring now to the unorganized masses of observation in which the human process as thus partially formulated appears to him who has the patience to analyze it, the sum of all seems to be this: The experience of mankind, or the *human process*, centers around ceaseless experimentation with congruities and incongruities between wants. More fully expressed, *the human process moves in cycles of conservation of compatibles among wants, persons and groups (with corresponding elimination of incompatibles), and it exhibits persistent sublimation of the retained values.*

As this process becomes more and more conscious, as human judgment and volition have more evident parts in its guidance, as its provisional decisions fall more and more into terms of the less

and more desirable, of good and bad—measured by the consciousness of the group—it becomes increasingly evident from our center of observation that the principle of decision to which practice tends to conform is—consciously or unconsciously—*compatibility*. Those types of wants, persons, groups, that can accommodate themselves to other wants, persons, groups, stay. Those that cannot so adapt themselves disappear. This process becomes prophetic when we observe farther that it acts in conjunction with the unconscious and conscious gradations of wants, thus driving toward some sort of advance in the quality and combinations of satisfactions.

EXCURSUS ON DARWINISM AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF METHOD

The history of Darwinism should be a lesson for all time in the economy and morals of scientific procedure.

Today all scientists are agreed that Charles Darwin deserves credit for the final touch to the kaleidoscope of physical observation which brought into focus a uniformity which had been in part discerned for centuries, which for the larger part of the previous century many scientists had been aware of in a semi-conscious way, which predecessors like Lamarck and contemporaries like Wallace had almost grasped in its literalness, but which had eluded generally convincing formulation.

As it appears to a layman in physical science, that uniformity may be expressed in this way: The processes of nature, as we have observed them, are as a rule gradual, not catastrophic. After the lapse of periods which seem to us long, nature impresses upon the outcome of her previous work additions, subtractions, qualifications, accommodations, each to our view microscopic, or perhaps less, in quantity, but together amounting eventually to visible departure from previous forms. We have never been able to discover a mathematical point in time after which vegetable or animal species existed that did not exist before. In some cases we have made out a period of time, earlier than which no traces of a given species have been found. On the other hand, all the circumstances surrounding the existence of the earliest specimens of any vegetable or animal species that we know tend to confirm the belief that nature had been at work through long periods, experimenting with progenitors of that type before the specimen under our observation came into existence.

All this was brought to expression by Darwin, and the name "evolution" was associated with it in such a vivid way that the substance of the generalization—*vid.*, gradual construction versus instantaneous creation—came rapidly to have the force of a fact, not of a theory. People found, however, that their acceptance of this generalization was itself not an exception to the rule of gradual construction. Reviews of the course of thought brought out the fact that

this awareness of the protracted character of nature's operations had been straining for expression time out of mind, and that it had been spoken out more or less distinctly by many observers, in the two or three generations immediately preceding 1858.¹

It has come about then that the scholars who are first-hand investigators, and the laymen who have accepted their findings, have fallen into the habit of referring to "the fact of evolution." What they mean by this expression is that gradualism is such an invariable practice in nature's constructions, exception to the rule of gradualism is so rare, if there actually be exceptions (De Vries), that gradualism itself, whether we call it by that name, or evolution, or something else is a demonstrated way of nature's working—or for short a *fact*. Giving to that fact for convenience the name evolution does not change the universality of it as a fact, one way or the other.

But the very prominence of Darwin as spokesman for a long line of observers, and as discoverer of details which constituted inductive evidence of a reality that had long been partially guessed (e.g., Herder)—this very prominence of Darwin led to confusion in the popular mind, and in not a few scientific minds, which has been unfortunate both for the immediate progress of science, and for the immediate assimilation of such science as we have into general intelligence. This was the blunder of *identifying evolution with Darwinism*. Important as Darwin's own work was, he has been credited up to date with very much more than his share of the merit of a co-operative discovery, as well as for much undeserved ill-fame both for things which he is supposed to have said about the discovery, but did not, and for failure to say the final word about all the mysteries connected with the discovery. Without striving to increase or diminish Darwin's dues, let us symbolize them by the term Darwinism. That term then really stands for one man's attempt to formulate and explain the discovery *evolution*, or *gradualism*, which many men had partially made.

The author of a recent treatise on evolution said to the writer a few days ago [January, 1922]: "Among investigators of nature the reality of evolution has the force of an axiom, but as to the explanation of evolution scientists were never so completely up in the air as they are today."

This situation has gone far to confuse the minds of non-scientific onlookers. They have interpreted the differences of opinion among scientists about ways of explaining evolution as evidence against evolution itself. This is like concluding from the age-long differences of opinion about explanations of history that there has been no history.

Darwin leaped into the spot light as the most impressive formulator of evolution, and he proposed what turned out to be for a time the most impressive theory for the interpretation of evolution. This formulation and this proposal of interpretation are the proper content of the term Darwinism. But as we have

¹ See Osborne, *From the Greeks to Darwin*, Macmillan, 1908; Judd, *The Coming of Evolution*, Cambridge University Press, 1911; Newman, *Evolution, Genetics, and Eugenics*, chap. ii.

said, the popular mind and many scientific minds were presently identifying Darwinism and evolution. This is like identifying Bossuet, or Montesquieu, or Herder, or Hegel, or Hume with history. When scientists began to recover their second breath after their reaction to the appearance of Darwin on their horizon; when they began to pull themselves together for research under the stimulus which his studies and results had given; when they were able to deal with the Darwinian categories "struggle for existence," "survival of the fittest," "natural selection," as guesses about details, not as oracles, nor as the alleged substance of nature itself, they found out that Darwin's work had virtually consisted not in removing the mystery from nature's workings, but in asking questions about nature's workings in more penetrating forms than had been framed before. Instead of closing the volume of natural revelation, and stereotyping and copyrighting its contents, Darwinism has served to mobilize all the previously registered guesses about the program of nature in carrying on evolution, and to hatch fresh broods of surmises in place of the old ones. What are the respective shares of heredity and environment in evolution? Is there an evolutionary procedure corresponding with the category "mutation," and if so, how important a part does it play in evolution as a whole? Is there such an incident in evolution as the "inheritance of acquired characteristics," and if so what part does it play in total evolution? How close approximation to reality are the so-called "Mendelian laws," and how far do they go toward formulas of the method of evolution in general?

Such questions as these and the thousand and one involved questions are more open now than any question about nature's methods was before Darwin wrote. That is, we have come to consciousness of evolution or gradualism as nature's habit, but the details, the method of that habit, except in particulars which thus far defy credible organization, are apparently farther beyond our apprehension than before we arrived at the inclusive conception.

In short we are convinced of evolution, but we are confused and incredulous about all the proposed explanations of the method of evolution.

One step farther. In the early days of Darwinism, people, both scientific and amateur, talked glibly about the "law of evolution." We hear less of that phrase today, and that fact is good evidence, so far as it goes, of progress in intelligence. Unless the phrase "law of evolution" is a mere substitute for the phrase "methods in the evolutionary process," it can have no meaning except as a symbol for a formula supposed to generalize the particular methods involved in evolution and the complete plan of their operation. In the present state of our knowledge, the idea of a "law of evolution" in that sense is more chimerical than the conceit of a "law" of destruction that would supposedly be a formulation of the behavior of the several and collective fragments which would be left after an explosion of dynamite. Since, as we have seen, responsible scientists disclaim pretension to know what the methods of evolution are, except in meager particulars, the notion "law of evolution" is, to say the least, premature.

Now the whole foregoing reference to evolution is by way of illustration.

Suppose our generalization "cycles of the conservation of compatibles" had established itself as firmly in scientific and popular conviction as the generalization "evolution" or gradualism has. The idea would then be a specialization under the larger generalization "evolution." It would be a substitute for all the proposed philosophies of history and a provisional organization of all that we have observed about processes in that range of reality which we indicate by the term "human experience."

Under the supposition, we should then be, in principle, in precisely the same relation to the problems of method in this process "conservation of the compatible," which physical scientists are in with reference to the methods of nature in organic evolution; and we should be at least as far off from a "law" of social evolution as the natural scientists are from a law of physical evolution.

On the other hand, there is a constructive aspect of both these situations. As to the social science side, having as a working instrument the generalization "conservation of compatibles," the conception is of immediate use as a working hypothesis. If we adopt this working tool as a means of research, it becomes the task of every sociological investigator, whether he is trying to get acquainted with city neighborhoods or rural communities, or broken-down families, or juvenile offenders, or class conflicts, or international struggles, or historical successions—in either case the program of sociological research shapes up into different types of inquiry, direct or indirect, as to the sense and the degree in which the phenomena in question conform to the generalization. All the records of human experience now at our command take on a new scientific value as tests of the validity of the generalization. All our direct contacts with contemporary human experience furnish problems of interpretation in terms of the generalization; and conversely, the generalization must be tested by its usefulness in detecting aspects of directly observed experience which had not before been evident.

For example, what, if anything, might be gained by approaching study of the present (February, 1922) situation in the Chicago

building trades, as presumably a typical episode within the human process of "conservation of compatibles"?

So much for introduction to certain fundamental conceptions: *the human process* and immediately implied terms, such as "compatibles," "values," "social process," "sublimation," etc.

There is another angle from which to consider *the human process* as formulated in the generalization "conservation of compatibles." Every conception of the meaning of life, every *Weltanschauung*, has received its final rating in men's judgment by test of its availability as a term in the formula of ultimate ethical standards, or as a means of moving toward an ultimate ethical standard. By "ethical standards" we mean the last criteria which different types of philosophy have been able to apply to finite values. In a later note the significance of the foregoing for ethical valuation will be considered.